

REMARKS

Claims 14-33 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 14-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101, because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 14-23 and 26-33 are allowable and stand rejected on informalities (e.g., 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph). Claims 14, 20, 21, and 24-33 are amended herein. This amendment is being made based on a telephonic interview between the Examiner and the undersigned attorney on December 14, 2004, in which the specific claim amendments presented in this amendment were discussed. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections based on the following discussion.

I. The 35 U.S.C. §101, Rejection

Claims 14-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101, because the Office Action indicates that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. These rejections are traversed as explained below. As amended, independent claim 14 now recites, in part, “said authentication party using said computing equipment to determine whether said coupon is authentic;” in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestion. Thus, claim 14 has been amended to overcome the rejection, and accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection to claim 14 and to dependent claims 15-23.

With regard to claims 25-26, Applicants have amended these claims to place them within the proper statutory subject matter guidelines of 35 U.S.C. §101. In particular, the claims are directed to an “electronic coupon device” and specific electronic components are now used to define the various elements of the electronic coupon device. Thus, the Applicants strongly suggest that such language overcomes the non-statutory subject matter rejection.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw these rejections.

II. The 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph, Rejection

Claims 14-23 and 26-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. These rejections are traversed as explained below. Accordingly, independent claims 14 and 26 are generally amended to include, “said redemption party (computing device) being non-competitive from said issuing party (computing device)” and “said issuing party (computing device)”

reimbursing said fee to said redemption party (computing device).” This language, as suggested by the Examiner, would place claim 14 in proper form. With regard to determining the validity of the coupon, Applicants note that such a limitation is positively recited in dependent claims 15 and 27, respectively.

Thus, because the language “said redemption party (computing device) being non-competitive from said issuing party (computing device)” is being included in independent claims 14 and 26, respectively, the determination of the validity of the coupon is no longer an essential step, which would require it to be in the independent claims. This is so, because since the redemption party and the issue party are non-competitive, there would be no hesitancy on the part of the redemption party to accept the coupon from the issuing party because they are non-competitive parties. That is, if these two parties were competitive, then each would be wary of the other’s motives, and the validity of the coupon would be absolutely necessary. However, because the parties are non-competitive, they essentially trust one another, and as such the redemption party would accept the coupon without the validation by the issuing party, especially because the authentication party is determining whether the coupon is authentic. Therefore, the Applicants strongly suggest that incorporating the language pertaining to the determination of the validity of the coupon is not an essential step required in independent claims 14 and 26.

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

III. Formal Matters and Conclusion

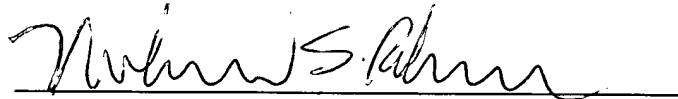
In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims 14-33, and in particular, amended independent claims 14, 24, and 26 are now in proper form and in condition for allowance. Further, dependent claims 15-23, 25, and 27-33 are similarly in proper form and in condition for allowance, not only by virtue of their dependency from patentable independent claims, respectively, but also by virtue of the additional features of the invention they define. Thus, the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Moreover, the Applicant notes that all claims are properly supported in the specification and accompanying drawings, and no new matter is being added. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary. Please charge any deficiencies and credit any overpayments to Attorney's Deposit Account Number 09-0441.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 15, 2004

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad S. Rahman', is written over a horizontal line.

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